Cambridgeshire County Council

learning together

Autumn 2009 **Issue 25**

featuring:

- **Community Cohesion**
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- **Equality**
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- **Art**
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- **From Bhangra to Barber**
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a termly magazine for school staff & governors

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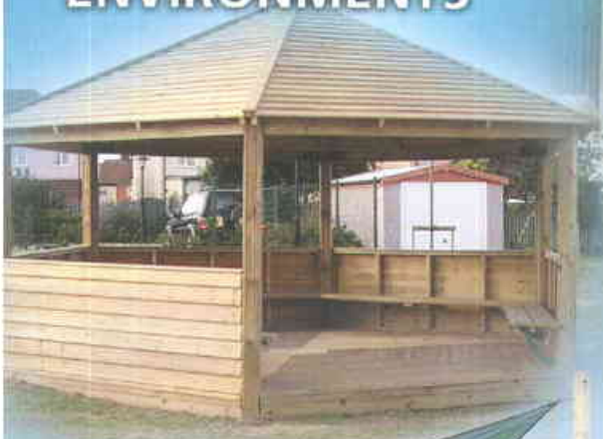

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Dear readers...

Welcome to the **Autumn** edition of **Learning Together** which focuses on **Community Cohesion**.

As you know, the duty on school governing bodies to promote this arrived with the Education and Inspections Act 2006. We can, I believe, be very proud of the progress we have made in Cambridgeshire to embrace the challenges of the new duty. We have, indeed, gone well beyond the duty because our definition of community cohesion extends beyond gender, disability and race/ethnicity to include all the other equality strands such as age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In this issue you can read about a wide range of innovative and exciting examples of good practice from schools and settings. We live in uncertain times and Cambridgeshire is not immune to the challenges of insecurity, especially as our young people access the world in unedited form through the internet.

Last November we contributed to a national Ofsted cross-directorate survey of social responsibility and community cohesion. The feedback from the Inspectors was resoundingly positive. Comments included:

- All settings know and understand their communities well, and appreciate the diverse needs and potential barriers to the promotion of community cohesion. This is underpinned by shared values around inclusion and social justice.
- Student voice is a strong feature across most settings, supported by appropriate training to empower young people to discuss issues, make decisions, and take ownership and initiative.
- At LA and institution level a high priority is set for developing harmonious communities where diversity is valued and celebrated. Young people achieve well in Cambridgeshire and great care is taken to monitor the progress of individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.

Since the survey, the good work has continued as recognised both in Ofsted reports and by other national bodies. At secondary level, Netherhall School has gained the Gold Award for Cultural Diversity from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Well-deserved recognition and congratulations to them!

We are clearly taking positive steps towards forging cohesive communities and the children and young people of Cambridgeshire are informed, involved and increasingly taking responsibility through the strategies and initiatives of our educational establishments, to influence the future shape and values of these communities.

Gordon Jeyes
Executive Director – Children and Young People's Services

Acknowledgements

Articles, letters and pictures
We are keen to receive all contributions. Please send them to Paul Ainsworth, Box SS1003, Babbage House, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP or email: **paul.ainsworth@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

Notes for Contributors
Ideally contributions should not exceed 500 words and much smaller contributions and news items are also welcome. Please include photographs with parental permission to print when possible. We have produced a guidance note for contributors.

For a copy please phone Sonia Fresco on 01223 699221 or email: **sonia.fresco@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

The deadline date for the next edition of **Learning Together** is **19 February 2010**.

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Editorial Team: Rob Howard, Liz Waring, Simon Cobby, Linda Lloyd, Libby Cull, Val Cameron, Paul Ainsworth, David Mills, Helen Whiter, Julia Newman, Carol Peel and Amanda Askham.

Designed by: Out of the Bleu Tel: 01767 687287

Printed by: Clanpress Tel: 01553 772737

Published by: Children and Young People's Services

Website: **www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

Cover picture: **Huntingdon Town Children's Centre** arranged a **Free Fun Day** on **September 19th** as part of **Sure Start Children's Centre** week.

Learning Together is printed on FSC-certified, chlorine-free paper which is fully recyclable. Only vegetable-based inks are used.

Challenging **homophobic** language

St Matthew's Primary School Cambridge serves a socio-economically wide catchment area, and our pupils speak more than 40 languages.

We have been recording racist incidents and empowering our school community to challenge racist behaviour and language for a number of years, but have become increasingly aware of children using homophobic language.

Over the past two years, we have been working in partnership with SexYOUality, a local charity that supports LGB young people, and Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service, to challenge homophobic language in our school community. We recognised the need to involve all staff, so began our project with a whole staff training session delivered jointly with SexYOUality. This raised awareness of the issues and gave teachers and support staff the opportunity to explore and discuss how they might respond to homophobic language and incidents.

Following on from this session, SexYOUality provided a workshop for Year 6 pupils; the feedback illustrated how the session enabled the children to look at language and some of their behaviour from a different perspective. There were some very positive comments about how much they had learnt and how they would behave differently in future and challenge homophobic language when they hear it. At the same time, we started recording homophobic incidents in the same way as we record racist incidents and children and families were made aware of this.

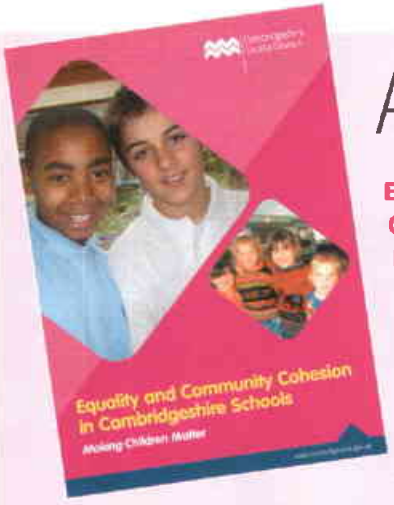
We are also addressing homophobia and heterosexism across the curriculum, not just in PSHE. For example, in a year 5 literacy module, the children looked at old picture books and identified things that were missing or that have changed over time – for example there was less ethnic diversity in the older books, gender stereotyping and heterosexism were commonplace. The children then read some books which challenged the stereotypes and used them as models to write their own picture books. Finally they took their books to a year 2 class and shared them with the younger children.

We recognised the importance of normalising homosexuality through the curriculum and we took account of this when the school's PSHE coordinator contributed to a national SEAL development project. The focus of the project was on strengthening the diversity dimension of the primary SEAL programme and our teacher developed a unit of work for Reception-aged children around the theme of anti-bullying. This included the use of stories which feature diverse family groupings, including same-sex families. This unit of work has been published locally and nationally and will be used again this year with our Reception classes.

We have shared our anti-homophobia work with other primary schools at a county conference and contributed a case study to Stonewall's recently published document, ***Challenging homophobic language*** which is soon to be distributed to Cambridgeshire schools. Our good practice on this initiative was also recognised by Ofsted when they undertook the Social Responsibility and Community Cohesion survey in Cambridgeshire in November 2008.

At St Matthew's we continue to challenge homophobic language around the school so that being a member of our community can be a positive experience for all our children and families.

Liz Steel
Assistant Headteacher



A **reminder**

Equality and Community Cohesion in Cambridgeshire Schools: *Making* Children Matter was first issued to schools in January 2008. It provides schools with a framework for developing a single equality policy incorporating their race equality policy, disability and gender equality schemes and a policy statement on community cohesion. It enables schools to personalise their policy so that it reflects their own context.

Appendices include step-by-step procedures for developing disability and gender equality schemes; sample equality statements; self-evaluation tools which will help schools produce their equality and community cohesion action plans and references to national documents and websites for further information.

You can find the document on the Schools' Portal: **www.cceducation.net** Resource ID 3983 or contact Dawn Rogers for a hard copy.

What do these items have in common?

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Governor news

Recognition for Governors – Celebrating Success

It seems a long time ago since **Cambridgeshire Governor Services** welcomed governors' clerks' and guests to join together in celebrating success!

On 8 July at Hinchingbrooke Performing Arts Centre, about 70 people gathered to recognise a variety of achievements. Governors and clerks had been nominated to receive awards for long service and outstanding contributions to the governing body, while others received a certificate to demonstrate their commitment to governance having attended a stipulated number of training courses.

Councillor Martin Curtis, Cabinet Member for Children, gave the opening address and the evening was drawn to a close by Ray Worsley, Head of Education Support Services.

This biannual celebration is co-ordinated by Cambridgeshire Governor Services in partnership with Education Personnel Management Ltd who provide training for school governors on Personnel issues. Directors Bev Curtis and Maureen Cooper helped Carol Peel, Governor Services Manager to hand out certificates.

Speakers acknowledged the enormous amount of work that governors and clerks do to help schools strive for continuous improvement. Governors aim high to achieve good outcomes for children at their schools by meeting their many responsibilities.

As governors are volunteers the event was a chance to thank them for their commitment to the education of children and young people in Cambridgeshire and to recognise all the hard work that takes place every day in all our schools.

Certificates of Achievement were awarded to:

Linda Baron	Thriplow C of E (A) Primary School
Rachel Brown	Hemingford Grey Primary School
Catherine Cleary	The Bellbird Primary School
Dr Derek Cracknell	St Peter's C of E (A) Junior School
Lucy Crebo	Manor Community College
Barry Cundell	Manea Community Primary School
Geoffrey Datson	Swaffham Bulbeck CE (C) Primary School
Ann Day	Barrington C of E (C) Primary School
Jim Doherty	Neal-Wade Community College
Julie Edwards	Great Paxton C of E (VC) Primary School
Tina Finn	Crosshall Junior School
Tony Godfrey	Wisbech St Mary CE (A) Primary School
Sue Homewood	Hinchingbrooke School
Shirley Johns	Barrington C of E (C) Primary School
Judith Manwaring	Milton C of E (C) Primary School
Chris Metz	Steeple Morden C of E (C) Primary School
Chris Page	Hemingford Grey Primary School
Malcolm Price	Barrington C of E (C) Primary School
Marilyn Rolin	Buckden C of E (C) Primary School
Roger Salmon	Kings Hedges Primary School
Barrie Vardon	Alderman Jacobs Primary School

Certificates of course attendance were received by:

April Baker	Hardwick Primary School
Jacqui Buck	Huntingdon Nursery School
Frank Butterfill	Teversham C of E (A) Primary School
Zandra Davies	Cherry Hinton C of E (C) Infants School
Emma Faid	Netherhall School
Margaret Glen	Orchard Park Community Primary School
Helen Naylor	Gamlingay First School
Helen Odey	Great Staughton Primary School
Brenda Reay	Guyhirn C of E (C) Primary School
Valerie Ridgman	Barton C of E (A) Primary School
Julie Robson	Kingsfield Primary School
Trevor Thomas	All Saints I.C (A) Primary School
Dounia Turner	Warboys Community Primary School
Jane Winter	Hinchingbrooke School
Carol Wylde	Great Paxton C of E (VC) Primary School
Mary Jane O'Sullivan	St Laurence's RC (A) Primary School

Induction Training

New governors are encouraged to attend an initial Induction training session to help them both to understand the governors' role and play an active part in their governing body from an early stage.

Other courses have been identified as ideal follow-ups. They will, as a whole, give governors a good grounding across the range of governing body responsibilities.

The full set of courses for new governors is:

- Induction course (National Training programme for New Governors)
- Funding and Budgeting
- Monitoring & Evaluating the Curriculum
- Recruitment and Selection in Schools

A certificate is awarded to governors who complete a full set of courses within their first two years in post.

Details of all courses are on the Education Portal. Log on and search on Resource ID 3148.

As well as the opportunities for face to face training, governors and clerks in Cambridgeshire have access to online training – **Governors 'E' Learning**.

The **GEL** website offers a variety of training modules including governor Induction and Taking the Chair based on the DCSF National Training Programmes for governors.

Governors and clerks can register by navigating to **www.elc-gel.org/governors**

The White Paper: Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future: Building a 21st century schools system

The White Paper recognises that good governance is a vital part of the functioning of any successful school. In particular governors play a vital role in raising the performance of schools. The Paper notes that they deserve our thanks as well as our support for all that they do in their own time to support the achievement and success of children and young people.

The Paper, amongst other recommendations, supports the development of governors:

- by the promotion of more highly skilled governing bodies;
- by improved governor training Nationally, to set the pace for more effective governance in schools and to raise standards and for increased accountability;
- by encouraging governing bodies to be supported by a trained clerk to advise and guide them on the exercise of their functions;
- by encouraging governing bodies to carry out a skills audit of their membership to identify any skills gaps and to target recruit to ensure these gaps are filled;
- by an expectation that chairs of governing bodies undergo specific training for this role.

Family workers plug the gaps

The **Extended Schools** concept is very familiar to readers of this magazine.

However, although the aims of the initiative are the same nationwide, how schools or school clusters go about achieving them is a matter for local decision. The Netherhall cluster of schools in Cambridge is developing an imaginative approach involving employment of Family Workers and the Editor learned more from Caroline Peet, Headteacher of Queen Edith Primary, Steve Lewis from Netherhall and Michaela Edwards, the Family Worker at Queen Edith.

As well as Netherhall itself, the cluster comprises its six feeder primary schools and each has recruited a Family Worker. Caroline explained that the main aim was to establish long-term supportive relationships with relevant parents. Many agencies do of course carry out short-term work with some parents but this project aims to provide continuity of support through nursery to Year 6. This enables support to begin early so that a relationship of trust can be built up.

I actually met with Caroline at an Every Child Matters roadshow which Debbie Heath had organised for the Cambridge South Extended Schools cluster. A whole host of services had information stalls in a "market place" at CPDC and Family Workers were amongst those taking advantage of the networking opportunities. Caroline sees one of the strengths of the scheme being the extent to which schools work together like this. There have been joint training sessions for all the Family Workers, with the chance to share practice, concerns and successes. They also work closely with other staff operating in the arena such as Parent Support Advisers, Nurses and Social Workers. These latter workers do of course tend to be targeted at particular groups with particular needs, often at a high level, but there are many other parents with less urgent needs but who would benefit enormously from advice and guidance before those needs escalate – it's this gap which the Family Workers are filling.

Each school is adopting the approach which suits it best. At Queen Edith, for instance, there's a coffee morning each Friday where parents, especially new ones, can meet Michaela informally and have a chat. All parents have received basic information about the service and can self-refer, which has worked well. Michaela also runs a Chill Out Club for children at lunchtimes which enables her to get to know them.

Michaela told me about the wide range of families she works with, some quite intensively and some on a one-off basis. Often the interaction revolves around a crisis after which her involvement tails off but the relationship will have been established should she be needed again in future. Much of her work is around signposting people to sources of help or guidance but sometimes just being there to listen is enough. An important part of the role is feedback to class teachers – parents are invariably happy for the outcomes from discussions to be passed on and the information will generally be valuable for the teacher.

Steve from Netherhall talked me through the different approach adopted at secondary level where the emphasis is on working with the children and building from there. Four staff, all of whom work in a pastoral and welfare capacity, have a percentage of their time dedicated to Family Support. The key aim is to help young people to better control their own lives; to some extent this kind of work has always been done but it now has greater priority and more resource and structure (e.g. staff are always available at particular times of the day). The extent of engagement with parents will vary depending on need – perhaps a weekly phone call, sometimes visits on or off site. There's also lot of work around transitions, involving close liaison with the primary school Workers.

The programme is very much in its infancy but all concerned are confident that the early successes will be sustained and that the model will prove attractive for roll out elsewhere in the county.

info

Further information (The Cambridge South Cluster now has its own website at www.southcluster.com, containing lots of information about services in the area. It's presently a "work in progress" and comments are much welcomed, including suggestions for further links).

web

Back in time at Burrough Green

The current redevelopment of **Burrough Green primary school** gave **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** the opportunity to help pupils engage with their local archaeology.

Burrough Green is a small village near the Suffolk border, around 11 miles from Cambridge and occupying one of the most picturesque areas of the county. The area contains a great deal of archaeology, not least two moated sites within the village itself. Some of the current school buildings sit upon the earthworks of a medieval moated site associated with the manor of 'Burgh' which takes its name from the 12th century landowner, Thomas de Burgh and encircles a moat island approximately 95 by 60 metres in size. Segments of the moat remain open and the north eastern arm retains water; elsewhere it has been filled in over the course of many centuries, now surviving only below ground. The south eastern section is visible as a depression in the ground and can be seen from the air as a cropmark. Following the period of its primary use, the area inside the moat was turned into a garden and orchard for The Hall, a grade II listed building to the south west. Remnants of the planting layout of the orchard still survive towards the centre of the island today.

The school redevelopment involves leaving the older (and listed) buildings in place and constructing a new school building to cater for the needs of both pupils and the village. Archaeological investigation of the site was included as a condition of the planning permission for the new school which led to a series of archaeological works being undertaken on the site.

A geophysical survey across the area of the new buildings in July 2008 suggested a series of features, possibly of walls, within the moated island. A subsequent archaeological evaluation found the precise location of the south east corner of the moat (in a trench near the front entrance of the school) along with information about its gradual sloping profile and its steady infilling over the centuries.

More excavations were carried out through summer 2009 during the first stage of building the new school, the results of which will in due course hopefully give us further insight to the life and times of medieval Burrough Green.

Given the site's wealth of information and the currency of the works, the school was selected by staff at Cambridgeshire Archaeology to host an archaeology themed art competition, an offer readily accepted by Headteacher Keith Archer.

Pupils from class 2, aged between 7 and 9, were asked to imagine what the site looked like during the medieval period, when the moat was full of water and the site occupied by a house; or alternatively to sketch some of the medieval artefacts on display. With the help of teachers, classroom assistants and Cambridgeshire Archaeology staff, the pupils got stuck in to the designs and created some remarkable pictures incorporating medieval buildings, animals and people whilst capturing accurate perspective and practising their artistic shading.

Entertaining but educational 'Horrible Histories' books were awarded to the top three entries, the winning entrant being Amy Fallon for her picture of a medieval cooking pot. Zoe Newton and James Newton took second and third places for their representations of the Burrough Green manor house.

At the outset of the summer holidays in 2009, the rebuilding, extension and renovation of the school began in earnest. By the end of August, the buildings were complete and ready for the start of autumn term with only the new path and playground to complete, bringing an end to seven years of planning and organisation. Both the school and County Council have worked hard to record and preserve the heritage of Burrough Green and also create a new building that can be used by the local community for years to come.

Sketching some of the medieval artefacts on display.

The **Samuel Pepys** mural project

When artist Syrah Arnold and Headteacher Mandy Green met to discuss the painting of a mural. At Samuel Pepys Special School, St Neots, both parties saw the ideal opportunity to use arts as a tool for education and to encourage community cohesion. The school already had an old, faded mural on an external wall overlooking the playground. As well as being "past its best", the old mural really had no connection with the pupils or staff and made the playground feel drab.

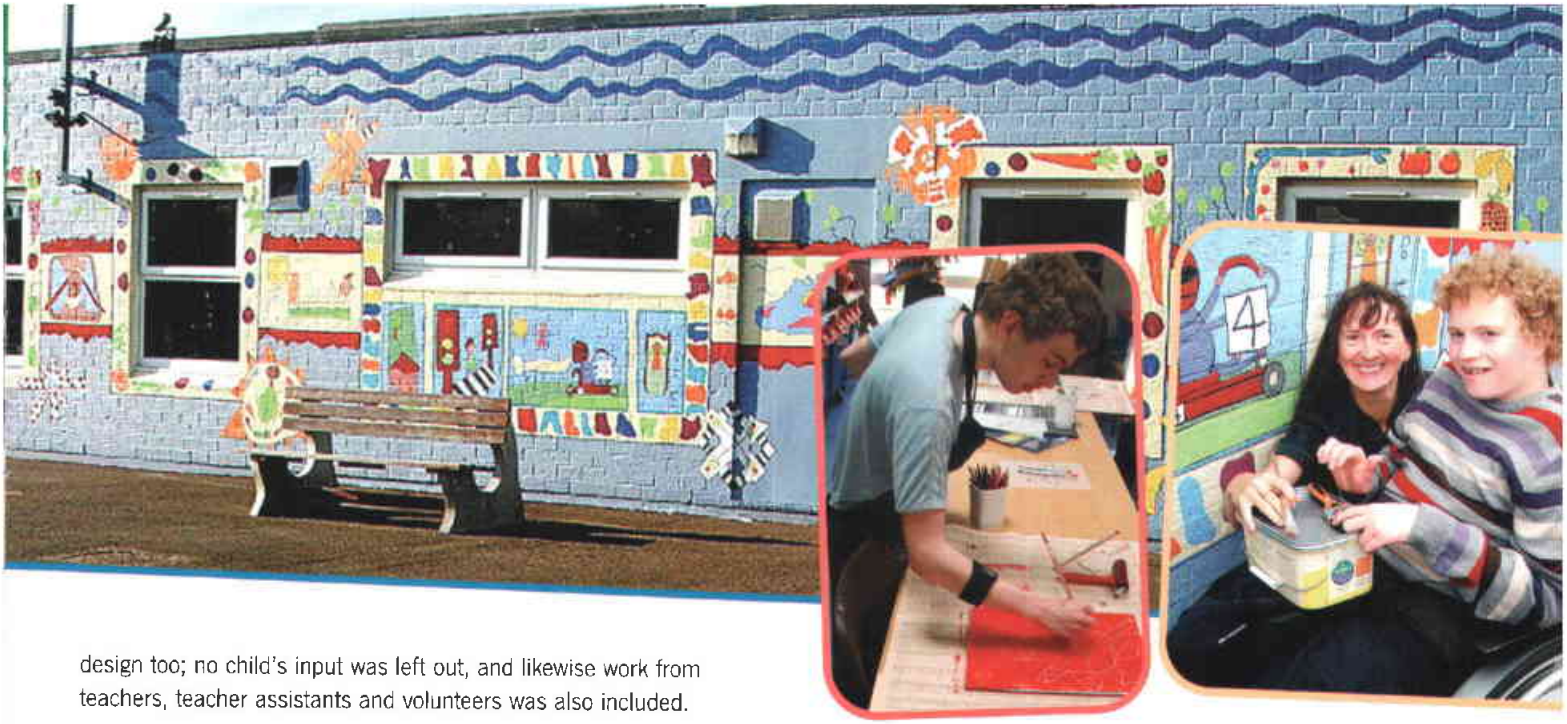
Professional illustrator and fine artist Syrah has nearly twenty years experience of working in schools and community settings as an artist, gallery curator and arts development worker. She firmly believes in the benefits of artistic engagement for the wider community and in accessibility and ownership of public art by the community. She therefore suggested that she facilitate arts workshops and then design the mural incorporating work from every student. Mandy was immediately enthusiastic about this idea, despite it involving additional fundraising work for her! The two then discussed ways of involving the community and also which areas of education could be used for inspiration for this visual arts project. The two areas that Mandy felt the students would benefit from pursuing were 'Staying Safe' and 'Staying Healthy'.

The project was designed to involve every pupil, aged four to nineteen, all with different disabilities or special needs, including those who are unable to physically hold a pencil or communicate verbally. Staff were also involved in the design process, as were community volunteers at the school. For the preparation of the wall and painting of the mural, other community members were invited to take part and Syrah received help from local school work placements and parent school governors and their relatives.

Syrah comments that "whilst I was the lead artist and in charge of the art sessions, I always rely on working with school staff as part of a team, and at Samuel Pepys this was more important than at a mainstream school. The staff know the children and the pace that each child can work to, and I ensure that staff know I am open to continuous feedback and suggestions to ensure that my sessions are meaningful to the pupils and challenging whilst being run at a suitable pace. I always work to achieve the best results together, as a team". The sessions were designed so that two year groups (year 8 and 13) had two sessions each, with all the others having one session. Depending on the age and abilities of the pupils, different artistic techniques were used, and some pupils worked on ideas for both themes, whilst others focused on either 'staying healthy' or 'staying safe'. Syrah commented " I am always careful not to simplify workshops when working with children – they can (and should) never be underestimated! I felt this was especially important at Samuel Pepys School. I worry sometimes that people confuse disability with intelligence, assuming that if you have one of these you probably won't have the second! The conversations and ideas that the children and young people came up with for this project and the level of focus that they demonstrated when working on their designs clearly disprove such a misplaced theory." Workshop volunteers commented "The workshops were fun but challenging; all our abilities and imaginations were stretched".

Pupils started their design process by discussing the various ways that they could stay healthy and/or safe and wrote or drew ideas to work from. Staff commented at their continual surprise at the varied ideas the pupils had and also the focus they demonstrated throughout the project. Although some children (and staff) found the initial idea generation difficult, once they broke through the 'designers block' there was no stopping the flow of ideas and designs! This is seen as one of the successes of the project – the pupils and staff really did push themselves to come up with more ideas, and also worked very much as a team encouraging each other and providing positive feedback and suggestions for developing ideas further. From the outset the conversational part of each session was intended to teach team working and the importance of listening to one another's' ideas and suggestions. Some sessions also involved pupils, volunteers and staff viewing each others' work and then incorporating elements from one another's designs into their own work.

Once the initial designs were complete, participants developed them further using different materials depending on the nature of the group and length of session. Syrah then had the challenging task of taking over three hundred artworks and combining elements from every child to create a stunning mural design, reminiscent of a textile piece. Ideas depicted in the artwork "are really wonderful and very original" and include healthy eating, exercise, play and getting a good nights sleep, creating a friendly atmosphere in the community, wearing cycle and go-kart helmets, wearing seatbelts in cars, crossing roads safely, and using sun-cream. Some designs were very illustrative, whilst others were quite abstract, including one boy's futuristic train which was developed from his ideas for travelling safely on public transport. Some children's disabilities meant that their contribution on paper was a series of lines or torn paper – but these represented different foods or exercise for the children and have been incorporated into the final



design too; no child's input was left out, and likewise work from teachers, teacher assistants and volunteers was also included.

Three final mural designs were developed for the school to choose from, the selected design being transferred by hand onto the school wall. The wall had been cleaned and painted white, ready for the mural, by the school caretaker, with assistance from pupils from another local school. It had not, however, been plastered (due to lack of funds), and has remained a rough brick wall. Syrah commented "I don't know which was worse; trying to paint smooth, straight lines on rough bricks, or continuously dodging rain-clouds!" The initial aim to complete the mural before the schools summer holiday was unfortunately thwarted by the bad weather, and on one occasion the mural suffered very bad water damage when an unexpected storm broke after just a couple of hours painting. Many pupils, staff and volunteers painted handprints which were included on the final mural, running along both ends of the building from the ground to the roof, and this part of the project was achieved before the school broke up for its summer break.

Syrah had some assistance in the painting from Samuel Pepys students and from Mandy, as well as from parent school governors and pupil's relatives.

Children and staff from a local Play Group using the school over the summer holiday also provided many comments on the mural as it took shape and felt a connection through conversations with the artist. Samuel Pepys pupils and staff returned from their summer break to a completed colourful and decorative mural overlooking and brightening-up the playground. Feedback from teaching assistants, teachers and volunteers include "the mural is a great conversation point as it is so bright and attractive. I've used it to remind pupils to wear sun cream or a helmet when using the go-kart". "The new mural has made our playground a really stimulating place to be. Some of the young children enjoy finding and touching different colours, patterns and pictures as a game".

The project received support from the local Rotary Club and paint was donated by B&Q; representatives of both have visited the school to view the mural and meet some of the pupils and staff. B&Q staff commented that they "felt good to be linked to a local school through the support offered" and that the project had made them more aware of activities at the school. Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education, linked with Shine (the national festival celebrating talent in young people) for Children's Art Day in 2009, and also supported the mural project. Syrah is now overseeing the publication of 2010 calendars depicting images from the project, which will provide a fundraising opportunity for the school and a marketing tool to reach out to the local community a little more.

Syrah commented "this project clearly demonstrates how art can be used as an effective and fun educational tool, and to encourage cohesion between schools and the wider community. Although we had fewer community members take part than we would have liked, those that were involved clearly got a lot out of their involvement. I hope that they will continue to find ways to be involved in the school, and that this project will act as a springboard for greater community cohesion between Samuel Pepys and the local townspeople."

Mandy commented "the pupils got a lot from their engagement with a professional artist and other community members, who they would not normally communicate or work with. The experience has been good for communication skills and confidence building as well as achieving other educational objectives. I'm delighted with the outcomes, both personal ones for the students and the creation of a striking mural which has gone on to stimulate learning, conversations and play. The project has also raised the schools profile in the local community through some community involvement and through local press coverage, which I hope we can build on and use as a corner stone for increased community engagement. It has also provided the opportunity for increased communication between the school and some organisations (who supported this project) and I am sure that we will continue to build on those relationships. As a school I am confident that we will learn from this project, including how to develop community cohesion further through arts engagement".

info

Further information please see the Samuel Pepys website – www.samuelpepys.cambs.sch.uk or Syrah's own website – www.syrahjade.com

web

Governors' Annual Conference

Community Engagement

the difference governors make

Saturday 6th March 2010
9.30am - 1.00pm

Hinchingbrooke Performing Arts Centre
Hinchingbrooke School
Huntingdon

Programme

The National Picture
David Moore, HMI

(David Moore comes highly recommended by headteachers and members of the Governor Advisory Group who attended the Community Cohesion Conference in the Autumn Term!)

How governors engage school communities
Mr Tarun Kapur CBE Executive Headteacher and
Cllr Brian Rigby MBE Chairman of Governors
(Ashton-on-Mersey School and Broadoak School federated to from the West Trafford Learning Partnership)

Representatives from Cambridgeshire School Councils
how their voices are heard and aspirations for the future

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Course bookings: governor.training@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or 01223 715324

Course information on the Education Portal www.ccceducation.net. Search by Resource ID 3148

Governors working together – a conference for governors in Fenland

The schools in March and Chatteris have traditionally worked together in their two distinct catchment clusters around **Neale-Wade Community College, March** and **Cromwell Community College, Chatteris**.

Recently Headteachers of schools in the two clusters have started to work together more and more, prompted by the formation of a Locality Team covering both clusters and the recognition that both groups of schools are grappling with many of the same initiatives and challenges.

The idea for a special governor briefing event came from Tim Hitch, Principal of Neale-Wade Community College, in response to the many changes that have happened and are planned for this part of Fenland which will affect all the schools in the two clusters. Plans for new school buildings under the "Building Schools for the Future" scheme are well advanced at both Community Colleges. The programme will transform the learning experience for both current and future students. The College of West Anglia was, until recent financial problems caused plans to be suspended, preparing to re-locate to a new campus on the outskirts of March. The area has a new Locality Manager and a growing Locality Team, a new Children's Centre Manager and staff at its two recently completed Children's Centres. The two clusters share a Cluster Co-ordinator who also keeps an eye on extended school services, the development of a safe place to be at the secondary schools and a varied menu of study support and enrichment activities at the primaries. With so much going on specific to the two communities of schools it made sense to give governors the chance to find out more at a local event tailored to fit their needs.

So on what seemed the hottest evening of the summer, 23 governors from 11 of the 15 schools in the clusters attended an evening briefing by speakers directly involved in the initiatives outlined above. The attendance exceeded expectations, particularly as that was the evening of Andy Murray's epic four hour, fourth round, five set Wimbledon victory under Centre Court's roof against Stanislas Wawrinka, which the rest of the country seemed to be watching on television. Mobile phone messages meant that regular reports on the score could be received between speakers. Governors who attended the event were rewarded with Neale-Wade's magnificent home-made biscuits, just one of which would be enough to sustain a tennis player through the most gruelling of matches.

Feedback was positive and the majority of those who completed an evaluation form said they would attend another similar event in the future. Andrew Pugh said it was a "very open and interesting discussion" while Peter Hewitt found it "generally helpful and informative". Michelle Deyna-Hayward thought it was "wonderful to meet Carol Peel, Manager of Cambridgeshire Governor Services, in person" and Carol herself was very complimentary about the biscuits!

Caroline Sheffield
Schools' Projects Co-ordinator, March and Chatteris Schools

Being a **school governor**

I was approached by a Primary School Headteacher from one of the schools that I was supporting in and asked if I would consider being a Traveller representative on the school Governing Body. I told him that I would think about it and I did think about it long and hard. I saw myself as a good role model and my decision was to become a school governor – that was 5 years ago now.

The reason for my decision was that I wanted to ensure the Traveller children were being treated fairly and receiving a good education, the same as all the other children in the school. I wanted to show that the school welcomed children from the community and us as adults as their equals. I feel that my viewpoint in meetings is helpful to the governing body and benefits both the Traveller and non-Traveller children. I feel that being a Governor has given parents someone that they can approach to air their views and at the same time the school has a voice in the community. I have enjoyed being able to have a voice and express my opinions about the way the school is run to help all children. I believe that I have helped the way the school thinks about all children.

Beatrice White

MONET-D classes in Histon

Gill Biscomb, Vice-Chair of Governors at **Histon Early Years Centre**, writes about a project which used art as the jumping off point for a whole range of activities.

Our Centre adopted the Northern Italian Regio Emilia approach to creativity some time ago. It encourages children aged 0 – 6 to question, reflect, problem solve and express their feelings through experiment and play. It was natural, therefore, that we signed up to the Cambridgeshire Culture initiative.

From the start of summer term 2009, the children were involved in a project called 'Art and Artists'. They ranged in age from rising three to rising fives with two year olds as involved and interested as their elder peers of 4+. We chose three artists: Claude Monet, Andrew Goldsworthy and Henry Moore. The children's work so far has been based on Monet and Goldsworthy. Our objectives were to develop the children's observational skills, to encourage dialogue, express opinions, share experiences and develop their artistic ideas.

We grouped Little Owls (pre-school) children in fours with a member of staff and showed them a Monet painting, 'Water Lilies'. The children were asked if they knew who the painter was – mostly they did! (One child's contribution of Monet Claude was quickly corrected by another). We then asked what they could see in the picture and what colours had been used. This helped the children to analyse how the images were achieved and to decide which aspects they wanted to use in their own paintings. Many children became interested in the bridge and made drawings which they used later when making their own clay bridges, using tools and manipulating materials to achieve the planned effect.

The Little Owls children also explored the concept of space and shape in the style of Andrew Goldsworthy, using natural resources. In the garden areas they categorised objects according to shape and size, noticing simple shapes and patterns in their constructions and talking about how they are the same or different and using words to describe position.

Children in the nursery were also very impressed with the bridge aspect of Monet's work. They developed a different focus, thinking about how bridges are made. They decided that the possible materials were wood, metal, glass concrete – and dinosaur skin! They discussed types of bridges, size and shape and drew, painted, planned and constructed their own bridges. The bridge concept also inspired a story made up by the children about Billy Goat Gruff. This class also developed the Robin Room Art Gallery, designing a sign, a list of visitors and tickets for entry. A visit to Kettle's Yard may well have inspired this development.

Another nursery group described their impressions of Monet's paintings of the Houses of Parliament as 'spooky', a monster's castle using spooky colours ie purple, black, dark blue and dark green. They used these ideas for their own paintings.

An awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and Every Child Matters agenda was a significant part of the Centre's planning for this project. Problem-solving, reasoning, numeracy and literacy were all integrated into the children's creative experiences. Exhibits in all parts of the Centre illustrate the effectiveness of the approach to the project.

Sir Ian McKellen and Stonewall come to Cambridge

Since 1989 the charity **Stonewall** has been campaigning to achieve equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people.

At school level, Stonewall's research has shown that two thirds of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils experience homophobic bullying in secondary schools.

"The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated, respected and protected."

For us, this includes the need to address homophobia in our schools, other educational establishments and wider communities and this work is embedded in our community cohesion strategy and plans.

To strengthen our existing work with local charity SexYOUality in supporting young LGB people and in tackling homophobia. We joined Stonewall's Education Champions' programme in October 2008. This has given the authority and our schools access to a national network of good practice and resources, opportunities to attend national training events organised by Stonewall and support from Stonewall's Education for All team to deliver local training.

Imagine our excitement when we were offered a visit by Sir Ian McKellen, charismatic campaigner for gay rights and staunch supporter of Stonewall, as part of the package!

Sir Ian has been visiting secondary schools in Education Champion authorities, talking to young people about their anti-homophobia work and to school leaders about how their school ethos supports young LGB people. We were extremely fortunate to host Sir Ian's visit to Cambridge on the last day of anti-bullying week and the 20th anniversary of the signing of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

The day's programme included visits to Netherhall School and Impington Village College, both of which have been working with SexYOUality on their Big Lottery funded Peer Education project. At Netherhall, Sir Ian was entertained by the cast of the school production 'Oliver' and offered them valuable thespian tips for their forthcoming performaces! He took part in a workshop run by SexYOUality for the school's anti-bullying group, cyber mentors and peer mentors, gave a dramatic presentation at a Sixth Form tutorial and was interviewed by the school newspaper team over lunch. The afternoon was spent at Impington Village College. There, Sir Ian offered valuable suggestions to the school council and anti-bullying group on strategies they might develop to support their LGB peers and tackle homophobia. He also made a powerful contribution to the Year 10 anti-bullying week assembly, met with the International Sixth Form Amnesty group and was treated to a dance and musical theatre performance, which was showcased at the county 'challenging homophobia' conference in February. Students, school and Local Authority staff who met Sir Ian were struck by his passion for the cause and the eloquence and conviction with which he spoke about LGB equality issues. He combined effectively a very personal account of his own experiences of coming out with examples of recent publicly perpetrated homophobic acts. He reminded adults and informed young people of the damage caused by Clause/Section 28 which became law in 1988 and, until its abolition in 2003, in effect prevented homosexuality from being discussed in schools.

At both schools, audiences were treated to a taste of Sir Ian's considerable acting skills as he performed a compelling speech from Shakespeare's 'Sir Thomas More' in which More challenges the people for their condemnation and proposed banishment of 'strangers'. He also gave each school library a gift of the recently published 'Queers in History' by Keith Stern.

The action-packed day concluded with tea and cakes at SexYOUality HQ with a group of young trainers and volunteers. They talked about the challenges they face and those faced by LGB young people around the world and Sir Ian was very positive and encouraging about the work of the group.

It was a wonderful experience for all who had the opportunity to meet Sir Ian and the young people involved in the day displayed great enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the imperative of eradicating homophobia.

From Bhangra to Barber – embedding understanding

Like many **Cambridgeshire** schools, especially those in rural areas, **Hemingford Grey Primary School** has a predominantly White British population. In the eyes of Headteacher **Kate Fox** this makes it even more important for children there to understand and value the wider world they live in and to respect other cultures and communities. The editor went to meet her to discover more.

Before describing some of the many initiatives which the school has developed, Kate was keen to stress that valuing both the immediate and wider communities in which the children live is embedded in the ethos of the whole school, not something which is added on from time to time.

The School Council is a good example of the ethos in action; members are democratically elected using manifestos, ballot papers and secret votes. The Council represents the collective views of pupils and has a very real input to major policy and strategy decisions. The Behaviour Policy, for instance, was generated by pupils and the school community and has succeeded greatly in developing a climate where learning suffers few interruptions. Pupils subsequently added the anti-bullying contract, later amended to specifically include anti-racist bullying.

Kate then told me about the work done with the school by Actorshop, a theatre-in-action group which uses the "forum theatre" method. The group's first work focussed on bullying, and was followed by schools in the St Ives Cluster experiencing the group performing an anti-racist bullying piece; local members of ethnic minority groups were also encouraged to attend. As a consequence, all the cluster schools now have a statement in their prospectus outlining their commitment to stamping out racist behaviours.

Actorshop returned earlier this year and presented pieces to KS1 children about the impact of gender stereo-typing and to KS2 pupils on the negative effects of homophobic language and behaviours – specifically around use of the word "gay" as a derogatory term.

All staff are expected to attend - parents and governors are also invited. **The aim is maximum support of the local community in building a culture where similarities and differences are both acknowledged and celebrated and where anti-social attitudes and behaviours are understood as damaging.** Feedback from all concerned has been overwhelmingly positive; adults have had to delve back into their pasts to revisit experiences and question values, with the journey not always being a comfortable one. However it is processes like these which truly enable the school to unpick what it wants its community to be. **The following quotes show the impact which Actorshop have had on pupils:**

> **"The most important thing I've learned is from Actorshop because if I'm getting bullied I know what to do. Also if I was to bully someone I would know how they would feel and stop".** Year 4.
>
> **"As a school, we should celebrate the visit from Actorshop this year because they helped make the school more welcoming to everyone".** Year 6.

Actorshop have since requested the opportunity to work with some Year 6 pupils on developing materials for use in other schools which address transition issues significant to children of this age.

Kate next explained the work done in recent years with Janet Moffat, the inspirational Headteacher of Melcombe Primary School in Hammersmith, London. Originally this was to develop a teaching and learning framework at the school, but it was soon realised that both schools could offer pupils meaningful experiences of very different schools and local environments. Both school councils met at Hemingford to talk this through and the then Year 4 class from Hemingford visited Hammersmith to compare and contrast local environments. As Year 5s, the children from Melcombe did a return visit last autumn. All children found the experience highly beneficial; it showed that both places, although very different, have much to offer their pupils and did away with any stero-typical notions such as the space and tranquility of village life being automatically preferable to the bustle and cramp of an inner city school.

Values

The Hemingford pupils realised how fortunate they are to have a wonderful field and open spaces in which to play; they also experienced the wide range of amenities, shops and transport opportunities which there are in London. Hemingford pupils were also in awe of the ability of so many Melcombe pupils to speak more than one language.

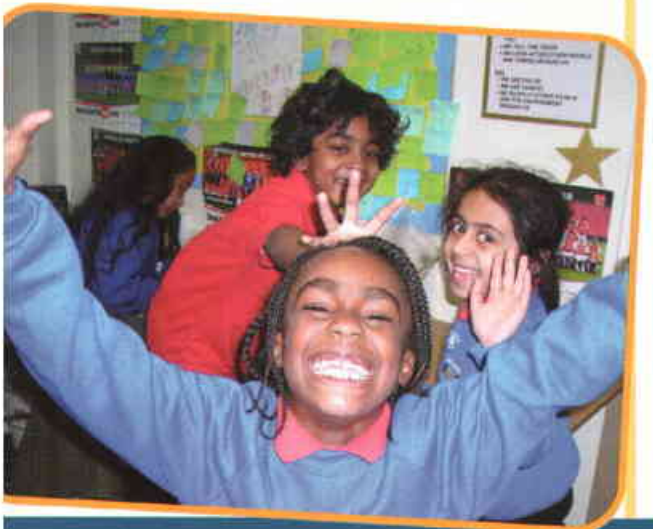
Central to the work the school has done this year has been the story of Miles Hilton told at the annual Headteachers conference;

Miles says that "attitude determines altitude" and Hemingford pupils are told that with the right attitude to life, people and learning, they are all able to achieve great things.

Hemingford's curriculum uses the arts and sports to ensure high levels of inclusion and a commitment to race, gender and disability. The highlight this year has been the visit from Vihjay, a Bhangra dance teacher, who visited with his dance troop so that parents could see just why pupils think he and his dancers are so fantastic. Pupils worked with Vihjay during the day, some learning traditional harvest dances from the Punjab and others a Bollywood twist. The school will now develop a curriculum which builds on all this work by looking even more closely at the opportunities provided by the local area. The school, along with six others in Cambridge, is part of an exciting project to generate challenging and exciting learning opportunities. This will provide further chances for Hemingford pupils to explore rich and varied places.

info

Further information Actorshop can be contacted at derekbrown@actorshop.biz



Young people get hands-on with their careers

Over 2000 students enjoyed an exhibition with a difference at the interactive careers event, Skills Cambridgeshire, held at Wood Green Animal Shelter, Godmanchester in October.

Students from 36 educational establishments across the county, mainly from years 10 and 11, had a chance to get 'hands on' with a range of demonstrations and activities from marzipan making to robotic operations and from nail art to remote control mini-diggers, broadcasting and presenting, photography to fitness testing to name just a few. This gave young people the opportunity to try careers they might not have considered before or even knew existed. Feedback has indicated that 95.8% thought the activities and demonstrations on offer were excellent and good.

The event helped young people consider their options for the future – whether to continue their education or step into the world of work and training. An exciting mix of over 40 exhibitors showcased a wide range of careers from engineering and manufacturing to fitness and hospitality. Industries were covered through national and regional employers, colleges, training providers and career organisations - there was plenty to think about. Connexions were there to give impartial information, advice and guidance.

The event was a great success, with enthusiastic reactions from exhibitors, teachers and students alike. Kate Noakes, from Bottisham Village College, commented: "Well organised, exciting and fun, thank you for inviting our school to such an excellent event. The buzz on the bus back to school was brilliant and so many of the students were inspired by the event to finally start thinking seriously about their future. We combined the activity as part of a PSHE day with help from Connexions and the end result has been positive. I hope you are able to run the event next year." All educational establishments who attended said they wanted the event to continue and would attend next year.

A student from Neale Wade Community College said: "It has really opened my eyes to the different courses that are available and if one thing doesn't suit, there's always something else to think about. It was fun and educational as well – I'd love to come again!" Her friend agreed: "The Air Force stand was really cool, and I loved the animals. It helped me think about what I can do in the future."

The event was organised by Prospects Events. Companies such as Napp Pharmaceuticals, the Armed Forces, College of Animal Welfare and Kiss FM joined the event's funding partners Cambridge Regional College, Aimhigher, Peterborough College of Adult Education, Anglia Ruskin University, Huntingdonshire Regional College, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council and The College of West Anglia.

Fun Day promotes Community Cohesion

Huntingdon Town Children's Centre arranged a **Free Fun Day** on **September 19th** as part of **Sure Start Children's Centre** week.

"There was an atmosphere of community belonging and spirit which made it all worthwhile".

The main aim was to bring together the local Huntingdon community by offering a range of activities suitable for all ages, with the accent on family fun and learning.

It was lovely to see families from a range of different cultural backgrounds all enjoying fun in the sun.

Families had a wealth of activities to choose from - games, bouncy castle, face painting, Judo displays, Bug Hunt, Crafts and Knex, to name but a few. There was also a Football Penalty shoot out with a £10 prize and trophy which attracted many youngsters.

Partnership working helped to make the event a huge success, with District Council, County Council, Health Services, Luminus Group, and Family Learning all playing their part. Valuable support came from parents who have accessed Children's Centre services in the past and now wanted to get involved.

Family Learning Services & Children's Centre staff had worked with local parents who wanted to support the schools sports programme by providing training. From this evolved an adult team of netball players who had the idea of organising an adult netball tournament. This successfully brought staff from local schools and nurseries together on the Fun Day.

One aim of the day was to promote Children's Centre services available in the area. This was done using questionnaires and talking to individuals. An information point was set up detailing available services. The Sure Start branding was presented in an eye catching way, with banners and balloons – making a festive blue and white scene.

A measure of the day's success is summed up in the following quotes from parents ....

"It was lovely seeing everyone come together from the whole community – I just expected to see our school here".

"My friend in London accesses Sure Start services – I didn't know it existed in this area".

The day was very well attended (300 people) and although it was our first attempt to put on an event like this, there was an atmosphere of community belonging and spirit which made it all worthwhile.

Building Links in Cambourne

When the editor visited **The Vine Inter-Church Primary School Cambourne**, his approach was through a building site. As he discovered from teacher **Carol Shepherd**, the school has made good use of this activity to forge links with the rapidly-growing local community.

Carol firstly gave me the lowdown on the recent year-long partnership between the school, the construction engineers of the new housing scheme near the school, Hillpartnership, and Circle Anglia, the housing association which will run it. The project involved Year One children following the house-building from breaking ground to completion this July. The children visited the site regularly to follow progress, study the machines, understand the safety aspects and learn about how the homes were being made energy efficient – they even got to build a wall! Carol was full of praise for the builders and developers who entered wholeheartedly into the project, with people often visiting the school to talk to the children. They also asked the children to provide artwork for the site boardings and safety fences which, as you can see from the photos, they did in style.

Carol showed me the two impressive portfolios of work which came out of the project containing photos, drawings, writing, personal accounts, newspaper cuttings and a CD. Hillpartnership and Circle Anglia donated two fruit trees for the school's organic garden plus pots with seeds for their scientific work; they also presented each child with their very own hard hat.

The same developers are embarking on another building scheme next door and this time Carol wants to pursue a whole school approach to the partnership work. There will be a different focus for each Year – KS2 children, for instance, will look in particular at things like energy usage and efficiency and use of sustainable materials.

A significant building project in Cambourne is the new church which should be complete by the time you read this. The foundation stage pupils have been following construction from the start and will carry through into KS1. The school obviously has very close links with the church but also has strong relationships with other businesses and organisations in the village – Morrisons, Cambridge Building Society, the opticians, the hairdresser etc.

The final community-oriented project which Carol highlighted is Stepping Stones, a commemoration of Cambourne's first ten years. The ten large stones will be laid near the temporary Jeavons school. Each has a design illustrating an aspect of local life and culture and Year ? children from the school have helped come up with designs for some of the stones. Various people – archaeologist, historian, urban planner and so on – talked to the children to sow the seeds of the ideas which have now been taken away by the sculptor who will produce the final articles.

Carol is clear that all this activity has been great in making sure that the children feel really plugged into their surroundings and their community. Their enthusiasm certainly shines through in what they've all produced.

Building new skills

PUPILS from a Cambourne school have been learning about the building industry – with tips from the experts.

The Vine Inter-Church Primary School has teamed up with construction engineers, the Hill Partnership, and affordable housing provider Circle Anglia to follow the construction of a brand new affordable housing scheme opposite the school, until its completion next summer.

At each stage the children will visit and record what they see, and produce a pictorial diary of the work.

The youngsters were given hard hats to wear, and a goody bag and certificate.

Debbie Higham, headteacher, said: "The Vine school is absolutely delighted to have been given such a fantastic opportunity to work so closely with Circle Anglia and Hill Partnership.

"The children can't wait to go back in January when they will be given a chance to help brick a wall."

Fiona Coulson, assistant director of development for Circle Anglia, said: "We all really enjoyed the site visit, and are excited by the children's enthusiasm for learning as well as the creativity they have shown with the pictorial diaries – it is inspiring for us all."

SITE VISIT . . . youngsters from the Vine Inter-Church Primary School at the construction site where, as part of their lessons, they will follow builders putting up new affordable homes.

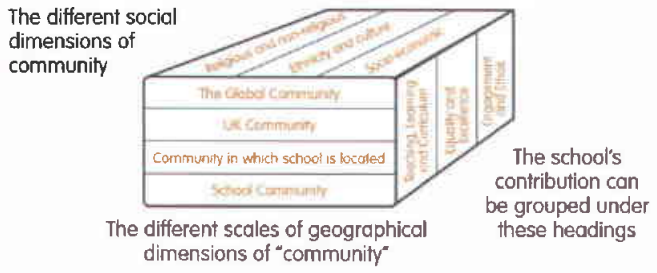
An **Inspector** calls...

The new Ofsted inspection schedule makes both **Equal Opportunities and Tackling Discrimination** and **Safeguarding** limiting judgments. This means that if a school is judged to be inadequate in either of these strands, its overall effectiveness is also likely to be judged inadequate.

The Ofsted judgment on how well a school promotes community cohesion is not a limiting one. However, the evidence inspectors are looking for to make this judgment is very closely linked with the equal opportunities strand.

The diagram below illustrates the various dimensions that Inspectors take into account.

Inspecting Community Cohesion – all dimensions


The different social dimensions of community
The Global Community
UK Community
Community in which school is located
School Community
The school's contribution can be grouped under these headings
The different scales of geographical dimensions of "community"

Key questions that schools should be able to answer are:

- What do you understand about the context of your school (with particular reference to local community information regarding faith, ethnicity and culture and socio economic factors)?
- How has your understanding of the school's context informed a planned set of actions to promote community cohesion?
- What impact are you having?

To help schools respond effectively, collect relevant evidence and plan school provision, the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) has produced a set of further questions (see below).

Auditing current practice and provision

To start the review process, schools and settings might audit their current practice and provision. The audits in the appendices of the county document ***Equality and Community Cohesion in Cambridgeshire Schools*** are designed for this purpose.
In addition, iCoCo has produced audits that correspond with the three areas:

- teaching, learning and curriculum
- equity and excellence
- ethos, engagement and extended services

These can be downloaded from the Teachernet website (see below for contact details).

Any audits which schools choose can be used to gather information, identify areas for development, review and monitor progress and evaluate impact of activities.

National findings from community cohesion inspections

Ofsted identified the following points and areas for development after their initial inspections of community cohesion:

- Promoting community cohesion is not always a high priority
- It is a complex area and there is some confusion about what it covers
- Schools often have not considered their own context and needs
- Some schools had not planned actions to promote community cohesion
- Evaluation of impact is generally weak
- Improving the understanding of all faiths is the weakest element
- Developing pupils' understanding of what it means to be a citizen of the UK community is less evident in curriculum plans than teaching about citizenship of the local and global communities.

Advice from iCoCo

- While Ofsted focuses on the three strands of faith, ethnicity and culture and socio economic factors, it is good practice for schools and settings to take account of other equality strands – age, disability, gender and sexual orientation - while planning their community cohesion strategy.
- There is no statutory requirement for schools to have a written community cohesion policy but there have been a number of examples of Ofsted inspectors criticizing the absence of a written policy. iCoCo recommends that schools have a short cohesion policy which may be incorporated into their (single) equality policy.

- Schools should compile an evidence folder which might include:
  - Local community profile data
  - School population data
  - School audit information analysed
  - Consultation exercises/surveys
  - Needs, priorities & action plans
  - Overview of links to other priorities/policy
  - Project monitoring: evidence of action taken
- The Ofsted grade criteria do not contain any specific references to curriculum content, but this does not remove the need to plan the curriculum to prepare all pupils for life in an increasingly diverse society. As one of the most common Ofsted criticisms is inadequate curriculum provision preparing young people for 'the diversity of the UK', it follows that planning for cohesion work should include specific reference to Teaching, Learning and Curriculum.

info

Further information and sources of support Ofsted guidance for inspectors
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Institute of Community Cohesion
www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk

web

Teachernet
www.teachernet.gov.uk

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Disability awareness afternoon

The children at Kennett CP School recently enjoyed a week based on the 'Mantle of the Expert' dramatic-inquiry based approach to teaching and learning. As part of the week a Disability Awareness afternoon was held to help the children consider including arrangements for people with disabilities in the thinking and planning linked to their inquiries.

Ten activities were arranged where the children could experience the effects of various disabilities and the children moved round them in small mixed aged groups. Sandra and Graham, visitors from Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, along with Edward the guide dog, gave the children a chance to experience various sight disorders by wearing special glasses while trying to do everyday activities. Sandy Holmes, the school hearing support worker, used head phones to give the children experience of hearing disorders. The children also did a risk assessment of the school for a wheelchair user, painted using their feet and tried to draw simple shapes while looking in a mirror.

Everybody felt the afternoon had been worthwhile and the children said that they had learnt how hard it is for people with disabilities to carry out everyday tasks. The next day the younger children were carrying forward their learning by making models of ramps to the swimming pool for wheelchair users where 'Talking Ted' was staying on his holiday in France as part of their project!

Making it **happen** at **Hinchingbrooke**

Hinchingbrooke School Huntingdon has a strong belief in the right of all students to attend a mainstream school and their **Learning Support** and **Inclusion Team** has the job of helping students with additional or difficult needs to achieve their potential. The editor met with the school's Assistant Head-Inclusion, **Tony Heath** and Deputy Headteacher **Di Beddow** to discover how they go about it.

Tony talked first about the school's approach to helping students with disabilities, where a Senior Level 3 teaching assistant leads a team of specialist staff. A recent major initiative has been to adapt a suite of rooms for easy use by wheelchair users along with development of a quiet garden within an enclosed courtyard. The latter has been a great success, providing a haven of peace not just for disabled pupils but others seeking a bit of calm. Hinchingbrooke United (the Student Parliament) has bought furniture and a fountain for the garden.

The school is developing a reputation as a welcoming place for pupils with disabilities. This led to a student joining the Sixth Form this year who has a severe visual impairment and it seems likely that a Year 5 girl who has Downs Syndrome will be coming in two years time. A child with mobility issues, a wheelchair user, has just reached Year 9 after two successful years at the school.

Hinchingbrooke has embraced the Playgrounds to Podium campaign, which seeks to develop and support young disabled athletes. Pupils performed well at the recent St Ives Youth Games and there has also been a Wheelchair Basketball Day where lots of people joined in.

The key message around all this activity is inclusion and avoiding any element of tokenism or separate treatment.

The same applies in the minority ethnic arena. The non-white British population at Hinchingbrooke is around 10% and extremely varied, with many different countries represented. As well as catering for the particular needs of these pupils, the school puts much effort into challenging racist attitudes using drama and other means. The staff group is also becoming increasingly multi-ethnic which further helps embed the equality ethos.

Moving on to supporting the general health and welfare of all pupils, Tony firstly described the work of the Young People's Health Centre, "Helping Hands". This was set up with support from the PCT and is open at the start and end of each day, and during breaks, as an information centre. One day a week PCT nurses and youth workers attend so that advice can be offered on a range of health and emotional issues, including sexual health and relationships. The hope is to extend to two days. A pilot scheme has just begun to employ a school nurse who will be funded partly by the PCT and partly by the extended school cluster; they are also part of the Locality Team. Tony and his colleagues work very closely with that team and he was full of praise for Team Manager Alison Smith and her team members. Their help is especially valuable where pupils have significant issues such as being homeless or excluded or having personal, family or mental health problems.

Finally we talked about the ways in which students contribute directly to local communities. Year 7 School Parliament members, for instance, are currently in discussions with Godmanchester Parish Council about developing better play spaces in the area. Hinchingbrooke pupils also worked with the County Archaeologist on promoting the Castle Hill area of Huntingdon, whilst others planned leisure amenities with the Youth Town Council. These sorts of activities really help students feel plugged in to their local communities.

What appears above actually gives only a flavour of the range of cohesion activities going on at the school. It was very clear to me that there is a genuinely "whole school" approach to cohesion issues and that it's very much a case of actions not words.

Building Community Understanding Cohesion – A Curriculum Approach

"Children are our message to a future we shall not see"

In Cambridgeshire we believe that children and young people make an accompanied journey of learning and discovery as they develop understanding of their individual and collective relationships to their communities.

Community Cohesion demands community understanding and the child's journey must acknowledge and embrace ever widening and more diverse and complex communities.

This is the function of "schooling" - to accompany, facilitate and sometimes lead the child's journey so that they develop skills, attitudes and understanding.

Entitlement

The Cambridgeshire Personal Development Frameworks seek to describe a progressive entitlement of experience for children and young people as they grow and mature. The core of this takes the form of questions that we think they have the right to engage with by working with their peers, adults and their widening communities.

So, when children are five or six we want them to think about:

- What different groups do I belong to e.g. family, classroom, Rainbows, friends, neighbours etc?
- Why are these groups special to me?
- In what ways are people I know the same and how are they different?
- What things are especially important to my family and me?
- What are some of the things that make our lives different?
- How can we show that we care about what other people believe in and how they live their lives?
- How do we celebrate what we believe in and how is this different for different people?

Eleven years later and the themes are similar but the world of community experience for 15 year olds has expanded:

- What does it mean to me to be a citizen in the UK and how does my understanding differ to other people?
- How can I understand the idea of "Britishness" to include everyone who lives and works here?
- How are our identities affected by changes in society, now and in the past?
- How do individuals and organisations instigate change within communities?
- Why is community cohesion important in my own community?
- How can we recognise difference between groups of people, while building on connections?
- How does community cohesion impact on my own rights and responsibilities?

Developing Resources

The PSHE Service is working in partnership with CREDS (Cambridgeshire Race, Equality and Diversity Service) and Sue Ward the RE and SACRE Adviser and Cambridgeshire schools to develop examples of best practice to support all our schools in helping our children and young people engage with these important and difficult questions. The outcomes will be teaching guidance, resources and support that will be made available to all our schools and settings.

We are starting with secondary schools at Keystage 3 and our school partners supported by Learning advisers and support officers are deliberately setting out to break down some of the subject barriers that have existed traditionally. So we have English departments, Scientists, Mathematicians, Religious Education teachers, Humanities departments and Art, Drama and Media Studies specialists working together to address the key learning themes of Community Cohesion.

"It's my flag too and I want it back!" (Show of Hands: Roots)

We are keen to include approaches and talents that can help children and young people engage with sometimes difficult and sensitive areas of learning such as working out how an individual can be patriotic and express national identity without being chauvinistic and exclusive. This will involve the use of drama companies and, we hope, puppetry to help children express and explore their views and anxieties safely.

Future Plans

Over the next two years resources will be developed for all phases and ages so that Cambridgeshire schools can draw upon a pool of proven and excellent practice in making their contribution to Community Cohesion.

For more information contact: Jon Pratt, Manager PSHE Service 01480 375171; jon.pratt@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Coates of many countries

The village of **Coates** is in the heart of the fens – a community where, in years gone by, the world view of most inhabitants would have extended no further than Whittlesey. Nowadays the strong commitment of **Coates Primary School** to exploring traditions and cultures all over the planet means that children there have a truly global perspective. The editor met with Head teacher **Wendy Martin** and Office Manager **Marion Seaton** to find out more.

The DCSF International School Award is an accreditation scheme for curriculum based international work in schools. Coates have just been awarded it for the third time. The positive impact of this was noted in the school's recent Ofsted report, which said "community cohesion is promoted well, supported especially by excellent international partnerships". Wendy and Margaret described some of these initiatives.

The school regularly supports Japanese interns for periods of three months to a year. They work with the children, teaching them about Japanese culture from craft activities and calligraphy to the tea ceremony; they also play a full part in village life, helped by the fact that their host family will live locally. The school has also hosted teachers, students and administrators from Switzerland and France.

Letter connections have been established with schools in many countries including South Africa, Switzerland, Germany and Kenya. Regular cultural weeks are centred around different countries or continents; the school hold carnival days, visitors are invited to perform (e.g. Indian dancing, Russian folk songs, a Japanese play) and the catering staff prepare appropriate cuisine. The school gets a lot of help from parents with these events.

On a more local level, visits have been arranged to a mosque in Peterborough, where the children were made very welcome, and to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. A link has been made with a school in Dudley, which has a multi-ethnic pupil base, and exchange visits have been made. Classes have received visits from people from various minority communities; for instance, an eastern European group came to talk about the issues they had faced in rebuilding their lives in a new country, which the children found a real eye-opener.

Having said all that, the school doesn't ignore the need to connect strongly with the local community. For example, the Silver Lining Club gets people over fifty into the school for meals, a big May Day event takes the whole school out into the community, local churches, farms and businesses are all linked in and a host of clubs and societies use the school building.

Back, finally, to the Ofsted report which commented "the commitment of the staff has resulted in diverse learning opportunities which also broadens pupils' understanding of the world in which we live. This is particularly so in the school's effective planning and promotion of community cohesion through interesting and often imaginative local and international links".

Exploring traditions and cultures.

Social Responsibility and Community Cohesion Conference

Delegates from all over **Children and Young People's Services**, including many from schools, gathered at **Murray Edwards College** on **6 November** for this important conference, subtitled **"Communities Learning And Growing Together"**.

Helen Whiter, Service Director – Learning, opened proceedings, pointing out that it is now a year since Ofsted carried out its survey of social responsibility and community cohesion in the county. The report had been positive and the good work identified has carried on, with schools continuing to gain praise from Ofsted on their community cohesion practice. However we still have much to learn and many areas to develop; the positive impact of community cohesion is still not a reality for some pupils, Helen also stressed Cambridgeshire's broad approach to cohesion which extends across all areas of potential inequality.

The Conference then heard from David Moore of HM Inspectorate, who is well known as an inspirational speaker and certainly didn't disappoint. His main message for Cambridgeshire was, yes, you're doing a lot, but how can you make it sharper? The emphasis nowadays in inspections is on the impact which initiatives have on young people and the whole school community, not on the initiatives themselves. Key to success is training for teachers and others so that they have confidence to explore fully concepts around race and diversity without being fearful of "saying the wrong thing". On faith issues in particular people can be scared of giving offence so say nothing at all which is much worse. David highlighted the importance of children understanding the difference between ethnicity and culture. The interaction between younger and older people is another area of increasing importance – identifying what binds the generations together. Finding out, generally, is a key part of the teacher's role and there are lots of things we don't know. David gave the example that only the other week he had learnt that Traveller boys are regarded as adults at 14 which has obvious implications for their schooling. If we don't know something then we have a duty to find out, or to ask someone to find out.

David concluded with the importance of believing that you can really make a difference. Leaders in schools must help colleagues who shy away from what they regard as a minefield. He finished by quoting the motto used by Martin Luther King "Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. No-one was there". The Conference next enjoyed two sets of workshops. The first batch offered a choice of "Learning Together to be Safe: A Curriculum Approach", "Responding to Racist Incidents" and "Community Cohesion and the Global Dimension". The second set looked at best practice to promote cohesion in each of early years, the primary phase and the secondary phase.

The afternoon sessions began with a performance of the Hate Play by the Box Clever Theatre Company. They had been performing this powerful piece in secondary schools throughout the county during the week and, indeed, pupils from Bottisham Village College were present to share their experience of seeing the play. It portrays the devastating impact of victimisation and hate crime on a group of young friends, and encourages young people to share their own thought on bullying and hate crime and what can be done about them. The Bottisham students commented on how realistic they had found the play and on how it offered strategies for intervening when someone is clearly being bullied. You can find more information at **www.boxclevertheatre.com**.

The final speaker was Professor Audrey Osler, Visiting Professor of Education at the Institute of Education Hong Kong and the University of Leeds. Audrey spoke on Education for Human Rights and Cosmopolitan Citizenship: Responding to the Challenges of Our Global Age. Audrey began by challenging the concept of global citizenship in favour of cosmopolitan citizenship, education for which she feels provides the best alternative to nationalist citizenship education. She argued that a citizenship curriculum which assumes a natural affinity to the nation-state does not necessarily enable racial justice. Citizens need to be able to express solidarity with all fellow human beings as part of the world community.

However, Audrey stressed, intercultural education must involve **critical** evaluation of cultures, including your own – you have to take a stand somewhere. Cosmopolitanism and patriotism can be partners, so long as patriotism is the kind that is open to universal solidarities, and against ethno and state nationalism. Education for cosmopolitanism implies a broader understanding of national identity. Human rights education has the real potential to transform.

Bethan Rees, Manager of CREDS, thanked Audrey for providing a challenging end to the Conference. She picked up in particular on Audrey's observation that many schools find it easier to examine diversity in terms of the other side of the world rather than what is happening locally. This is a particular challenge for our own schools, many of which are not very ethnically diverse.

So ended a very rewarding and thought-provoking day.

Monkfield Park: where cohesion is a habit

The Editor writes: Most of the articles I've written about community cohesion following visits to schools have focused on particular initiatives or innovations. It was good therefore to visit a school, **Monkfield Park Primary in Cambourne**, to find out about the whole range of activities being carried out – community cohesion is clearly "business as usual" here. I spoke with Headteacher **Lynne Anderson** and Deputy **Caroline Stamp-Dod** who began by telling me about work being done around gender and disability equality.

The school has a working party for this area made up of staff, governors and parents; one of the parents works in a special school and thus brings helpful specialist knowledge. A questionnaire about gender equality sent to parents and carers generated responses which were overwhelmingly positive about what the school is doing, with boys and girls seen as treated equally. The topic of male role models within a school with primarily female staff was raised; assurances have been given that lots of male outside speakers visit the school to address the balance. The 08/09 performance management targets for teachers seek to improve practice within the three strands of cohesion – local, national and international – with pupils and the wider community. Their identified actions have been collated and used to share good practice and agree further improvements. One way forward has been to build electronic links with a school in Wales whilst on a more local level, pupils have raised funds by bag-packing at the nearby supermarket, with half the money going to local charity.

Monkfield also joined forces with Cambourne's other school, the Vine, for a Youthfest; this included exploring what children in the community would enjoy doing so as to inform future planning. The Stepping Stones project, mentioned in the Vine article elsewhere, also involved pupils from the school.

Shortly after my visit, the school was holding a Disability Awareness day, with a speaker who suffers from cerebral palsy along with representatives of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and Dogs for the Disabled. Children would take part in activities to give them an idea of what it's like to live with a disability (subsequent pupil quotes which Caroline sent me suggest this happened – "I learnt that disabled people can achieve big things" (Year 6). "I learnt that people with a disability can still do what people with no disability can do, but in different ways" (Year 6).

Among the school's other initiatives around community involvement are:

- asking visitors to complete a feedback form about attitudes of pupils, friendliness of welcome and so forth
- getting pupils to take the register in a different language each day
- KS2 pupils participating in Comberton Village College's Spanglovision project as part of their learning Spanish
- A visitor from the Holocaust Memorial trust, himself a Holocaust survivor, who spoke to Year 5 and 6; their subsequent work displayed a lot of empathy
- Monitoring after school clubs for ethnicity and gender to help encourage broader attendance.

The school recently celebrated its tenth anniversary (with a commemorative sculpture being erected, based on the childrens' own ideas) and it has clearly integrated fully into what is a more diverse community than you might expect.

Community Ethos Endures at Bar Hill

Bar Hill Primary School began life as a **Community School**, back when the village was brand new (it recently celebrated its 40th birthday). Although the **Community School** designation is no longer used, Bar Hill remains very much at the heart of the community as the editor discovered when he talked to head teacher **Lin Whyte**.

Lin firstly described the work of the school's Citizenship Group which encourages children to develop skills around listening, buddying, dealing with bullying etc. Engagement with the wider community is a key feature; for instance, the group runs the Camill's Sunshine café each half-term and which is open to anyone in the community. It sells home-made cakes and other refreshments plus second-hand books and toys and is well attended by people from the village. The event is especially popular with senior citizens and this group is regularly welcomed into the school e.g. at Harvest Festival where the children give them flowers and special three-course lunches (for just £3.50) once a half-term.

The vegetable garden is another community-led enterprise with local people providing seedlings as well as hand graft – the produce is then used in the kitchens. The village allotment society has been particularly helpful.

Links with the church are strong and assemblies are held there at the start and end of each term; the church building is also used for concerts and productions needing a lot of space.

Bar Hill receives a British Council Comenius Grant that enables it to work with schools in Hungary and Germany. The link here is Esperanto, which the school teaches as a "springboard" to prepare children for learning other languages, as do the European link schools. Last summer there was a trip to the German school in Herzberg-am-Harz and this March children and parents from both schools came to Bar Hill – the three sets of children then put on a play in Esperanto. A visit to Hungary is happening in October. Lin feels that these exchanges really broaden the horizons of the children way beyond Bar Hill – where, as she points, out there is only one road in and one road out!

The Esperanto connection has also enabled a tie-up with a school in Bradford where 90% of the pupils are from ethnic minorities – again a very educative experience for pupils from a school with a mostly white British population.

The international dimension is further enhanced by the regular hosting of teachers from Tampa University in Florida, who stay for between three weeks and a year. The school has had the International Award three times.

Back to the local community and they get well involved in the school's annual Vision meeting. People from all over the village – businesses, industry, the police, the church etc – attend to input into reviewing and developing the school's vision and future plans.

The school is open five nights a week for all kinds of clubs, events and activities. This is a legacy of it having been built as a Community School, a mode of operation which has continued ever since.

The recent Ofsted inspection recognised all of this activity, stating, **"imaginative projects in the social community and with schools in several other countries demonstrate a strong and successful commitment to promoting community cohesion".**

Welcoming in any language

When, within three years, your population of children with **English** as an **Additional Language** goes from zero to 30%, community cohesion becomes a very live issue indeed. **Nene Nursery and Infant School Wisbech** found themselves in this position not so long ago and the Editor met with Headteacher **Lesley Mardle** and members of her staff to find out how they tackled it all.

Significant numbers of economic migrants have settled in Fenland in recent times and, contrary to popular belief, they include a lot of young families, not just single men. Most of these folk are from Portugal and Eastern Europe, the numbers of different languages and cultures concerned being considerable. Lesley explained that the school quickly had to develop strategies which ensured that children from these families had equal access to the whole curriculum. Although school staff had plenty of skills and knowledge around dealing with the full range of needs and abilities, and of using different ways to communicate, supporting children with little or no English was something else altogether. Lesley and her colleagues identified the first priority as gaining a better understanding of the issues. Fortunately the school had a TA, Geraldine, who was very skilled in helping children with SEN. She was given four weeks to devote herself to researching the subject and proposing ways to ensure that these children could begin to communicate as soon as they joined the school (and, as Lesley pointed out, in some cases they would only have set off from places like Krakov the day before).

Geraldine came back with some excellent practical strategies. One involved giving children a "fan" of plastic cards each with an illustration they could point to e.g. happy, sad, coat, toilet. Having such approaches in place gave the school confidence that new arrivals would quickly have real opportunities to learn. Geraldine has continued to develop these strategies and as a result Nene have been able to share good practice with others in the Wisbech Schools Project. A member of Nene staff is now a Leading Teacher in this area and Peckover School also has one.

Lesley also told me about the school's "Play with a Purpose" scheme and how this helps. All children enjoy a session each week learning through play activities, the latter being planned to support the themes and topics they're working on. The sessions have proved ideal for children with limited English because play is a common language to which all children have equal access. These play opportunities are incorporated into classroom activities throughout the school.

I asked about how the "indigenous" children had reacted to the changes in the school population and Lesley said that they had been overwhelmingly welcoming and helpful, often developing their own ways and means of communicating with the new arrivals. The school has taken steps to help the children understand what it must feel like to be in a strange country where you don't know the culture or language e.g. reading them stories in Portuguese, where they don't understand a word! Cultural differences are of course an unavoidable issue with some of the incoming parents having expectations and attitudes which are literally foreign to the school. This cultural "mind the gap" is becoming easier to manage as experience grows and as families settle and communities develop locally. The fact that parents all come through the same school gate has also helped increase integration.

Lesley is looking forward to completion of the Children's Centre on site which she feels will offer great opportunities for taking cohesion further forward, not least because of the flexibility in hours that will become available. Lesley highlighted the vital importance of the "front door", particularly for ensuring that new parents are put at ease. She is delighted that administrators Angela and Sarah have come up with brilliant strategies for communicating with parents. I talked with Angela who explained more. She said that most parents had at least a smattering of English so speaking slowly, using plain language, pointing a lot, repeating and especially, "being smiley" paid dividends. They also have a brochure with key phrases and information in both English and different languages so that parents can point to relevant sections in their own language. Most parents are keen to learn and quickly adapt.

I then had chance to speak with Geraldine, the TA who kicked off much of this work three years ago. Together with the class teacher, she is the first point of contact for new arrivals and starts by finding out as much as she can about their language skills, their likes and dislikes and so forth. Each child is given the information "fan" and then has an assessment to see how much English they do have. For some languages the school now has TAs who are bilingual and who can therefore help. The child then joins their class though Geraldine continues to work with them as well to develop their basic skills. Sometimes she also takes small groups out of the classroom for intensive work.

On a final note, Lesley wanted to stress how brilliant all the staff had been in ensuring the school met these new challenges, all being 100% committed to the project. She felt that the school truly was inclusive and it was impossible to disagree.

Bilingual support now on tap

CREDS has a new team of bilingual teaching assistants who have been supporting pupils new to English in primary and secondary schools across Cambridgeshire since May. They work as supply teaching assistants on a part-time basis in response to requests from schools.

The fifteen people in the team can, between them, offer support in eighteen languages: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, German, Hindi, Italian, Latvian, Malayalam, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Slovakian, Tagalog, Turkish, and Urdu. And they have other talents too! Many of them have higher degrees, one was a radio broadcaster, several are trained teachers, and three of them work as professional interpreters.

The response from schools has been good with one Headteacher writing: We have found the input VERY useful; it has helped us to gain a much better insight into the learning strengths and weaknesses of the two girls, and also to the family circumstances. The bilingual teaching assistant has been very helpful in pointing out to the parents how they can better support their children as they adapt to a very different kind of life.

Young people have also been positive and some have clearly found the support very important. One Bilingual Teaching Assistant reported that: The new pupil was holding my hand and didn't want me to leave.

If a pupil new to English arrives in your school do get in touch with CREDS and we'll do our best to provide bilingual support.

Rose Elgar
CREDS Outreach Team Manager

Contact **tom.wlodarski@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**
Tel: **01223 568841**

Our World comes to Wisbech

Back in July, 2000 pupils from thirteen primary schools in Fenland gathered at **St Peter's Junior School Wisbech** for their Our World Festival. Headteacher **Judith Skelton** told the editor more about this impressive event.

The 2009 Festival was the third to be held at St Peter's. Their aim is to encourage learning about the diversity of cultures in the UK and to provide positive role models for younger children to help combat racism.

This festival takes place on the school playing field (so good weather helps – as was the case this year). As well as a main performance area there are several gazebos which house workshops for individual artists. The idea is that children "tour" the site, spending time both watching the shows and taking part in activities and workshops. Performances at the 2009 event (which was opened by the Bishop of Huntingdon) included:

- Bhangra musicians and dances
- Indian song
- Chinese dragon
- "The Kushti Feeter" – a play about Travellers
- Molly and maypole dancing
- Peter Carter, the last eel catcher in the fens

East Anglian Heritage is very much part of the multi-cultural mix and St Peter's pupils themselves put on a Molly dancing display – this is a dance which was traditionally performed by East Anglian farm workers on Plough Monday.

Judith feels strongly that the Festivals are a powerful and effective way of introducing children to other cultures and help them appreciate and understand their wonderful diversity.

Climate Change

ALL ABOARD!

Em Ritchie joins the County Council's Waste team as the teacher-manager on their new **Recycling Bus**, doubling the fleet to two! She joins **Nick King**, featured in the June magazine, to teach children the value of recycling. Em introduces herself, and outlines what she will bring to the role:

"I trained as a secondary Drama and English teacher 15 years ago, and have taught Drama, Music, and Media to 11-18 year olds within secondary and primary school settings. However, my passion has always been to use the Arts to impact social change and I have been involved in projects with young people of all ages dealing with issues such as drugs education, HIV/AIDS awareness, racial discrimination as well as environmental education projects on recycling. I have also worked within the mental-health field using the Arts to raise self-esteem. The strands of gold linking these diverse areas are the creativity and bridge-building that the Arts offer its participants, and the proven evidence that the Arts can effect social change.

My recycling Bus will continue to offer the same cross-curricular Design-Technology Based activities as Nick's, with specific, curriculum-linked learning outcomes. All our activities are designed using underlying waste and environmental themes. We aim to promote the importance of reducing the amount of rubbish we produce, and our responsibility to think global and act local.

In the Spring Term, I will also be introducing practical, drama-based activities that explore the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' messages. These will be tailored to the individual School's response to sustainable development, and enable the student voice to be included in that response.

I am really looking forward to working with teachers and students, both on the bus and in the classroom. I love my work, and feel enormously privileged to share the students pride and confidence in their achievements particularly when they create something unique and individual. No day is ever the same!"

Energy saving measures add up

The County Council has recently launched a series of **fact sheets** aimed at helping schools reduce their energy use and limit their climate changing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

The fact sheets - providing guidance on heating, lighting, water use and meter reading - include a range of practical tips and longer term investment advice to help schools take the first steps towards cutting their energy use and avoiding excessive energy costs. The Council has committed to reduce its impact on the environment and tackle the causes of climate change. To help do this the Council has set an aspirational target to reduce its own CO_2 emissions by 30% by 2013. As one of the County's key services – and the largest source of emissions in the CCC portfolio – Cambridgeshire schools can play a key role in achieving this target.

In 2008/09 Cambridgeshire schools emitted over 39,000 tonnes of CO_2 – costing CCC £468,000 under the CRC.

From April 2010 new government legislation will also attach a cost to CO_2 for many large organisations, including the County Council. Under the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), CCC will have to buy a £12 carbon permit for every tonne of CO_2 produced.

The energy fact sheets are available to download via the Cambridgeshire Education Portal www.ccceducation.net or are available as hard copies on request.

web info

For more information on improving energy performance in schools or to request a copy of the energy saving fact-sheets, contact the Environment Policy & Projects team on 01223 715 560 or the Energy Management Team via energy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Achieving **Governor Mark** at Morley Memorial Primary School

Morley Memorial is a 'good' (Ofsted, September 08) community school in Cambridge with around 420 children. About three years ago we came across **Governor Mark**, a quality assurance programme for governing bodies. The process has three elements. The first involves completing an 'evidence grid', the second a series of 'impact statements', and the third is the assessment by a Governor Mark official.

We felt it would be advantageous to achieve Governor Mark for both developmental and pragmatic reasons. Governor Mark provided us with a specification of how an ideal governing body might conduct itself. Given that many governors had not been involved with any school other than Morley, this external perspective was extremely helpful, giving us an opportunity to identify a number of areas for improvement. More pragmatically, we took the view that achieving Governor Mark would help us with our next Ofsted.

The evidence grid is an extensive and potentially overwhelming document. It comprises eight criteria, all with sub-criteria, and each sub-criteria requires evidence to demonstrate that it is being met satisfactorily. We set up a series of 90-minute meetings to look at each of the criteria, and agree where we did and didn't meet the criteria. We built a website to host the portfolio of evidence, and generated spreadsheets that listed what action was required by whom in order to meet criteria where we were underperforming. Interesting discussions took place about whether the stated criteria were indeed 'best practice' or appropriate for Morley, and there were some criteria where we could say 'yes, we do that', but failed to produce evidence to support it. We spent too long compiling the evidence grid (the best part of two years), and lost momentum at various points. We were further hampered by the guidance for Governor Mark changing over the same time period. For example, when we started, we were told to gather as many items of evidence as possible for each sub-criteria, but towards submission we were told that there was a cap.

The second stage of Governor Mark was to compile the 'impact statements'. These comprise four written statements of up to 1000 words each, on different aspects such as 'community cohesion'. The guidance on this was variable. We understood, for example, that we should focus on a particular aspect to give a full illlustration of our impact, but the assessor penalised this, arguing that we should have provided more general information, and that as a result we undersold ourselves. The assessment process was also challenging. We had a day-long visit from the assessor who spent time with the Head, the Chair and a number of other governors. He had a strong sense that some of the criteria in the evidence grid were more important than others, and seemed to place more emphasis on the impact statements. Unfortunately, this view was not was not reflected clearly in the Governor Mark information we used through the process.

Overall, Governor Mark has been a positive learning experience for the governors of Morley Memorial. It has encouraged us to think about our purpose and how to maximise our effectiveness. Most significantly, it has encouraged us to translate these reflections into improvements that benefit our children, our staff and the broader community.

Pam Henderson
(Chair of Governors during the Governor Mark process).

glm
governance, leadership and management

Governor Mark has been developed by GLM – (Governance, Leadership and Management) Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire County Councils working in partnership. It is a quality accreditation award similar to other awards that are available to schools such as Investors in People, Charter Mark and Sports Mark. This Quality Mark has at its core the work and the expectations of Ofsted towards governing bodies, within the framework for school inspection.

info

For information about how to gain Governor Mark status please visit **www.glmpartnership.org**.

web

Connexions raise awareness of cyberbullying

Local teenagers recently worked with **Connexions** to create a short film about cyberbullying. The film was released during national **Anti-Bullying Week** in **November**. Sadly, research suggests that cyberbullying is a feature of many young people's lives.

The film, which explores the nature of cyberbullying and what young people can to do stop it, aims to raise awareness and to promote the support Connexions can offer. Lead Councillor for Children and Young People, Martin Curtis, was on hand while filming took place at the Connexions centre in St Benedicts Court, Huntingdon.

The young actors, who all attend Stageworks Performing Arts Centre in Buckden, were: Aimee Johnson, 14, from Stukeley Meadows; Georgina Hall, 12, from Oakington; Laura Hardeman, 14, from Sawtry and Paul Bartolome, 12, from Eaton Socon.

The filming and editing were carried out by PureVision Productions Ltd from Huntingdon – a company run by young entrepreneurs, Fred Soneya (17) and Nick Botham (19).

Martin Curtis commented: "Cambridgeshire County Council has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. It's important that young people who are being bullied are able to tell someone about it.

"Connexions is one place that teenagers can go for advice. Individual schools also have anti-bullying policies and procedures for tackling bullying. Hopefully the Connexions anti-bullying film will make young people more aware of the support that is available."

Filming took place at locations across Huntingdon, Buckden and St Neots. The Nags Head Hotel in St Neots and Tesco Extra in Stukely Meadows supported the project by providing their premises for filming.

The film will be sent to secondary schools and is available on the Connexions website www.youthoria.org.

web

"It's important that young people who are being bullied are able to tell someone about it".

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK
CYBER-BULLYING
They invaded my life and took away my confidence.
To watch the videos visit:
connexions
it's all about you
Don't blame me if she can't take a joke!
I'm not the bully, I laughed along - big deal!
They're my mates, it's hard not to go along with it.

Shirley Primary – Travelling Forward

Cambridgeshire has more Travellers in its borders than any other UK county. Given the traditional tensions with some parts of the settled community, achieving cohesion with what is our largest ethnic minority is very important. The editor visited **Shirley Primary School Cambridge** and talked with teacher **Jane Taylor** about the initiatives they have undertaken.

Jane explained that around 20% of the school population is from Traveller families, mostly from the nearby Fen Road site. Most have a Gypsy Roma heritage and last year they enrolled some Eastern European travellers.

The school has identified five priorities through the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Project, starting with use of data to target groups and track progress. This includes having literacy, numeracy and science booster groups plus a dedicated TA who supports late arrivals and children who have learning gaps because of travelling or illness. Priority Two is to improve quality first teaching and intervention programmes using AFL (Assessment for Learning) and APP (Assessing Pupils Progress). Training for staff and governors has also raised awareness of traveller issues and closed knowledge gaps.

The third priority has been to develop parent/carer and community partnerships and a lot of work has gone into this. Jane showed me the Traveller Cultural Display (see photo), the compilation of which fully involved both children and families. Parents lent books of photographs to copy, provided written accounts of traveller superstitions, customs and memories and offered a visit from a genuine Roma vardo (caravan). Children submitted their accounts of travelling and took photos of their site.

The displays covers:

- the Romany language
- the uniqueness of Traveller homes
- memories and traditions
- books.

Visit from a genuine Roma vardo (caravan).

Other initiatives in this area include:

- appointment of a Traveller governor
- providing five laptops so that all Traveller children have access to the internet to support their learning as part of the Laptops for Targeted Children initiative
- clubs, website and a distance learning pack
- visit to the Mount School in Newark which also has a significant traveller population.

The school's fourth priority is around transfer and transition, traditionally a challenging time. There has been much closer work with the feeder schools and the aim is to target families earlier, from year 5 onwards. Along with several boys, there is real hope that some of the girls will transfer next year.

Behaviour and attendance is the final priority, both of which are improving after many initiatives – phone calls, rewards, weekly class targets, trophy in assembly and a dedicated attendance officer employed by the school. Attendance reports for all children are being shared in consultations. The focus on attendance will continue, including those with 90-95% attendance as they may achieve the national average more easily than persistent low attenders.

Although the school has clearly made great studies, they aren't resting on their laurels and Jane mentioned several ongoing and new developments including:

- one to one interviews with parents to discuss self-ascription
- SEAL
- an anti-bullying week
- purchase of Traveller Times magazine
- parent reading sessions
- a nurture group

Kingsfield Primary School, School Council

Philip West, chair of governors at **Kingsfield Primary School**, provided the following information about the School Council's thoughts on school governors. The School Council met in **September** to discuss two key questions:

- **What qualities should a governor have?**
- **What makes a good governor?**

Their answers were informative and will feed into their governor welcome pack.

What qualities should a governor have?

- Kind
- Helpful
- Someone who is happy and friendly
- Thoughtful
- Someone who is good at asking questions
- Interested

What makes a good governor?

Someone who:

- has a keen interest in our school
- knows about our school
- would like to help us improve our school
- looks after the environment around the school
- would be willing to listen to our ideas
- has time to come and visit our school on a regular basis
- can suggest ideas to make our school fun e.g. new clubs

Welcome and farewell...

NEW HEADSHIPS

Rebecca Richards, Elton C of E Primary, from 01/10/09

Jenny Overs, St Mary's C of E Primary, from Jan 2010

Angela Smith, Priory Park Infant, from Jan 2010

Fiona McCullum, Elm C of E Primary, from Sept 2010

RETIREMENTS

George Cousins, Caretaker, Upwood Primary, after 34 years service to the school

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

32 Years

Mr Michael Butcher – Deputy Headteacher of Mathematics, Sawston Village College

Mr Philip Lyons – Teacher, Soham Village College

Mr Rob Richmond – Teacher, Sawston Village College

Mr Colin Walker – Deputy Headteacher, Fordham C of E Primary School

29 Years

Mr Nick Clifford – Teacher, St Peter's School

Mr Paul Morris – Teacher, Sawston Village College

Mrs Linda Richardson – Teacher Neale Wade Community College

28 Years

Mrs Peggy Connolly – Specialist Support Teacher, Meadow Lane, St Ives

27 Years

Mrs Janis Howlett – Teaching Assistant, Waterbeach County Primary School

Mrs Marilyn Sykes – Teaching Assistant, Brampton Village Primary School

Mrs Jackie Webster – Headteacher, Burwell Village College Primary School

26 Years

Mrs Liz Butler – Teacher, Manor Community College

Mrs Jackie Mueller – Teaching Assistant, St Anne's C of E Primary School

Mrs Angie Pike – Specialist Teacher, Admundsen House, St Ives

25 Years

Mrs Sue Baker – Specialist Teacher, Meadow Lane, St Ives

Mrs Penny Greenslade – Specialist Teacher

Mrs Gwenda Hodges – HR Manager & Pastoral Leader, St Anne's C of E Primary School

Mrs Dawn Smith – Teaching Assistant, William de Yaxley Junior School

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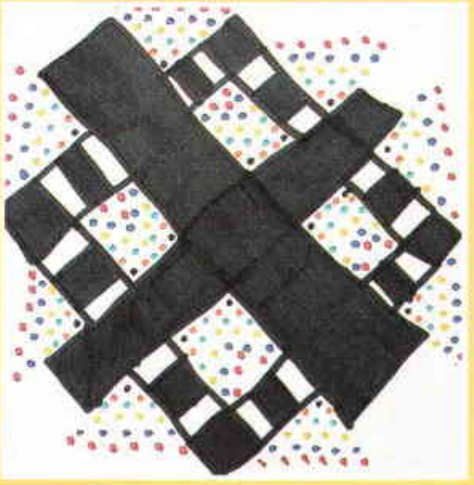

Back page artwork, images from workshops with pupils at Samuel Pepys Special Needs School, St Neots.